

## **Chapter 8:**

### **Senior Issues**

“He who laughs, lasts.”

Mary Pettibone Poole

“Youth is wasted on the young.”

George Bernard Shaw

“We've put more effort into helping folks reach old age than into helping them enjoy it.”

Frank A. Clark

## Senior Issues

### *Did You Know?*

- Nationally, there are 2,600 adult day care centers in urban areas and 800 in rural areas. But, an estimated total of 10,000 are needed. There are three licensed adult day care centers in Greene County.
- In Springfield from June, 2002, to July, 2003, 790 crimes were committed against seniors with 65.7% involving theft by robbery, stealing, burglary, or forgery.
- Obesity is an increasing problem for Greene County seniors. Approximately 24% of persons over age 60 report height/weight combinations that are considered to be obese in the United States.
- In the United States, approximately 30% (9.8 million) of all non-institutionalized older persons in 2000 lived alone (7.4 million women, 2.4 million men). They represented 40% of older women and 17% of older men. Among women aged 75 and over, half (49.4%) lived alone.
- Nationally, 9% of seniors reported they are currently smokers and 2% reported excessive alcohol consumption.
- More than 600,000 people in the United States age 70 or older stop driving each year, usually around age 85.

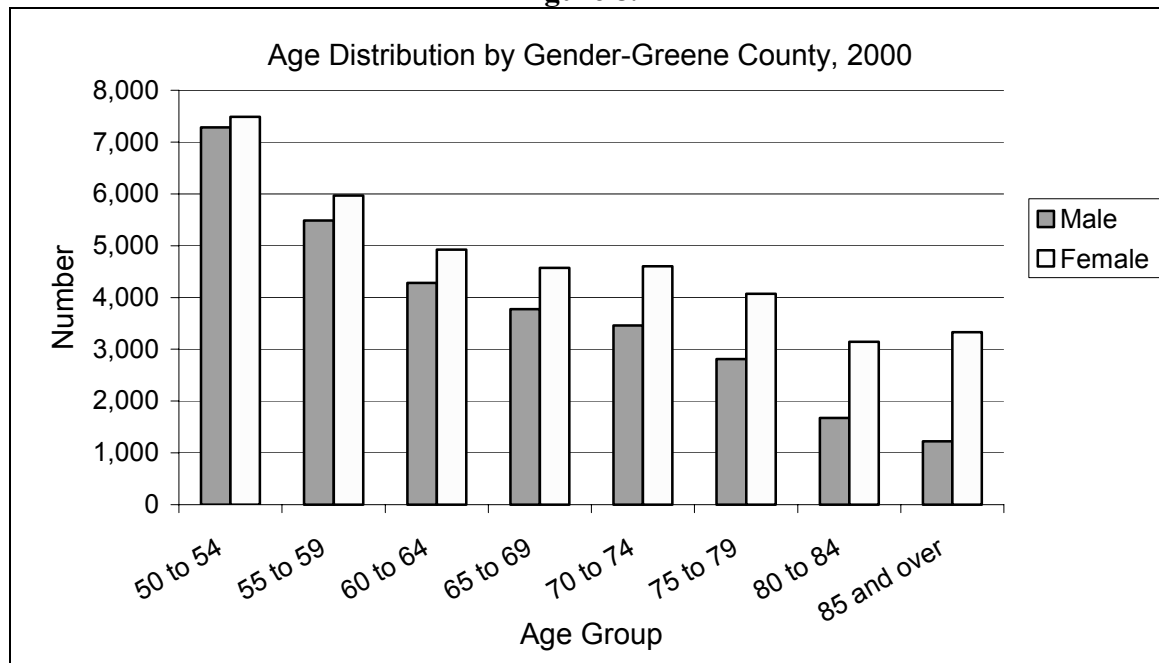
## Senior Issues

Seniors in Greene County encounter many problems including obesity, crime, diminished health, transportation, excessive health care costs, and poverty. Many seniors in our community rely on various social service agencies to address some of these problems. This assessment of the aging community in Greene County is intended to facilitate discussion concerning some of these issues while providing a glimpse of the current situation among the senior population.

## Demographics

The age and gender distribution of the senior community is provided in Figure 8.1. This chart indicates that by 2010 a larger number of individuals will be at least 60 years old.

**Figure 8.1**

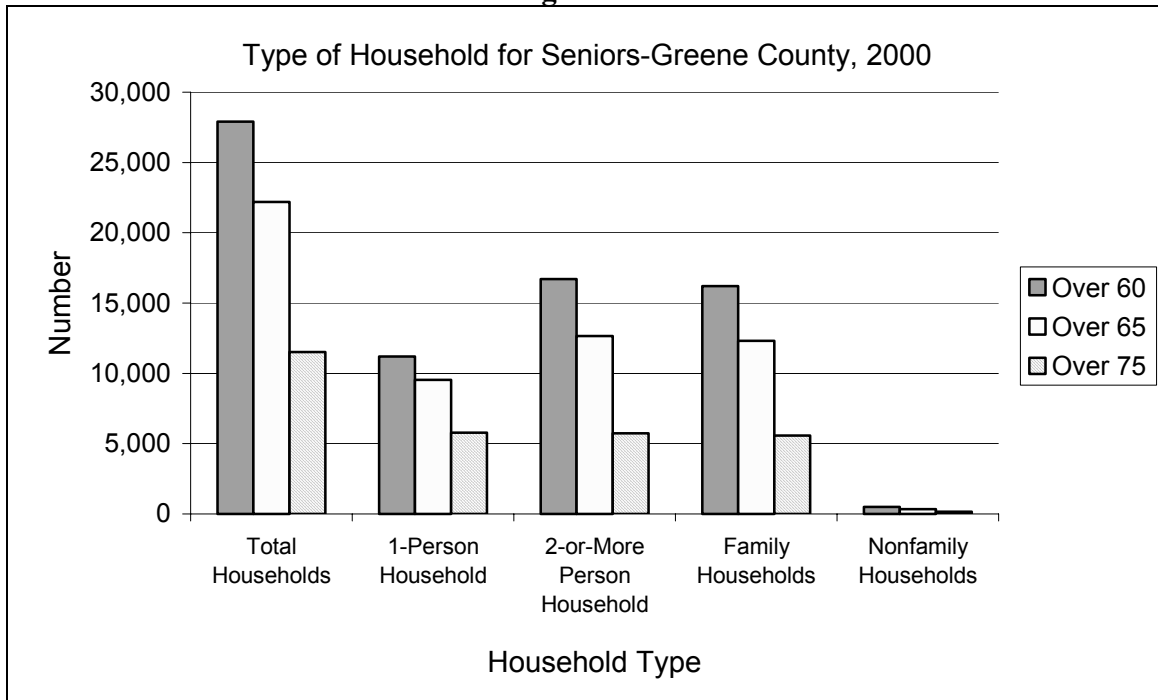


Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Figure 8.2 presents the characteristics of the household types for the senior population. Over 11,000 persons over the age of 60 in Greene County are living in single-person households. When considering the non-institutionalized seniors over the age of 60, 16,200 were living in family households in the year 2000, while 490 were living in non-family households.

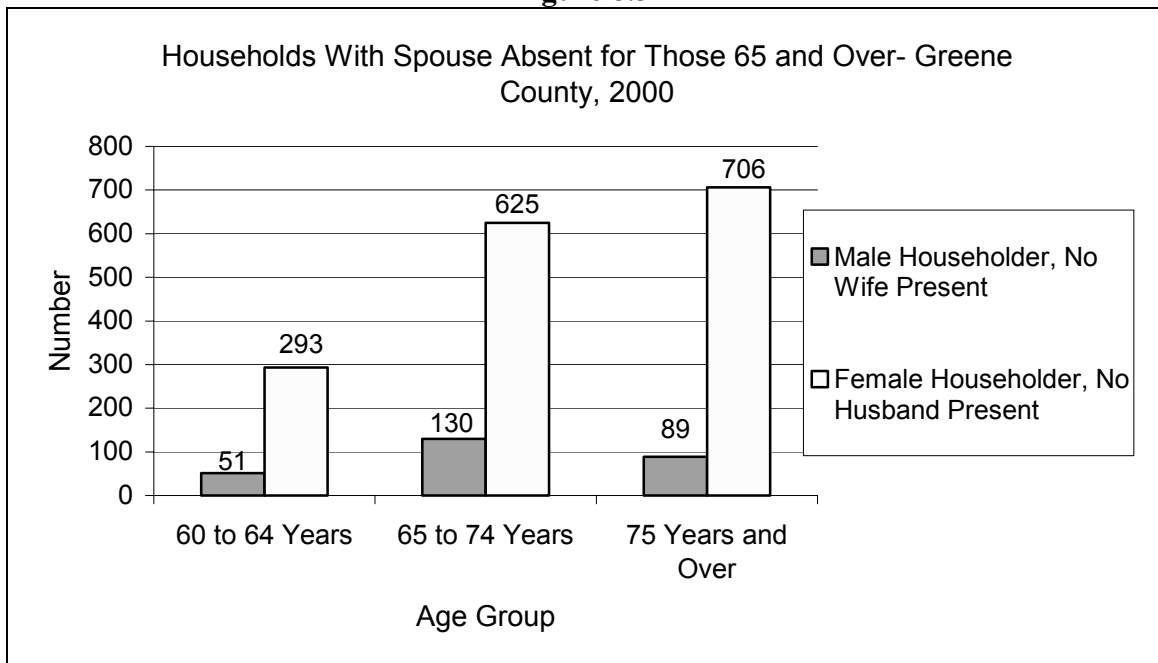
Figure 8.3 indicates by age and gender the households with spouses absent. Compared to men over 60 years of age, there were more female householders without a spouse present. The difference in number of households between genders also increased with age of the group.

**Figure 8.2**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

**Figure 8.3**

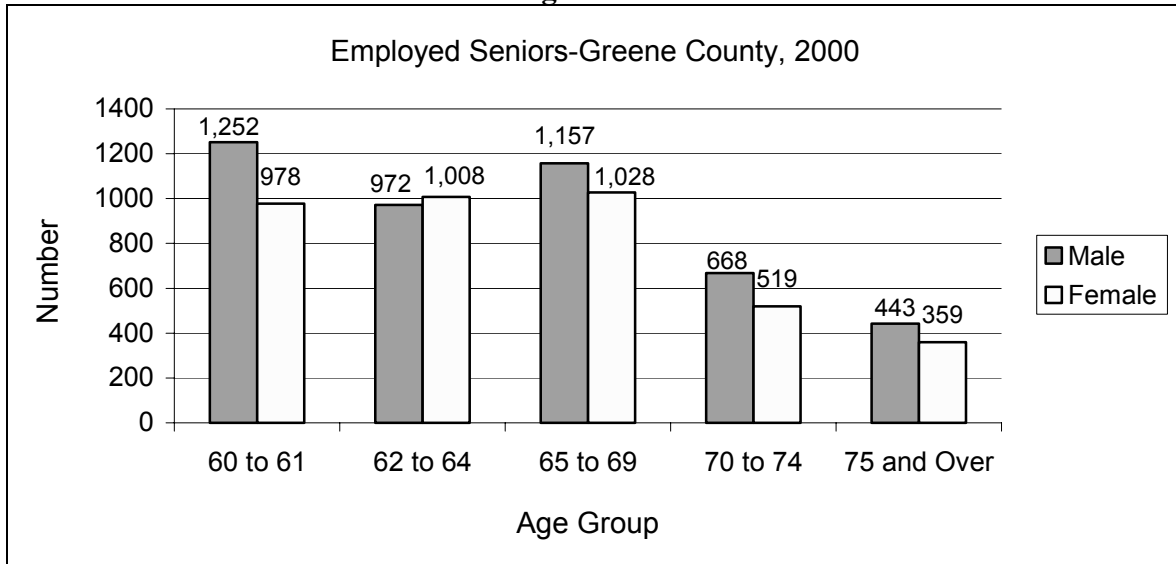


Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

## Poverty and Employment

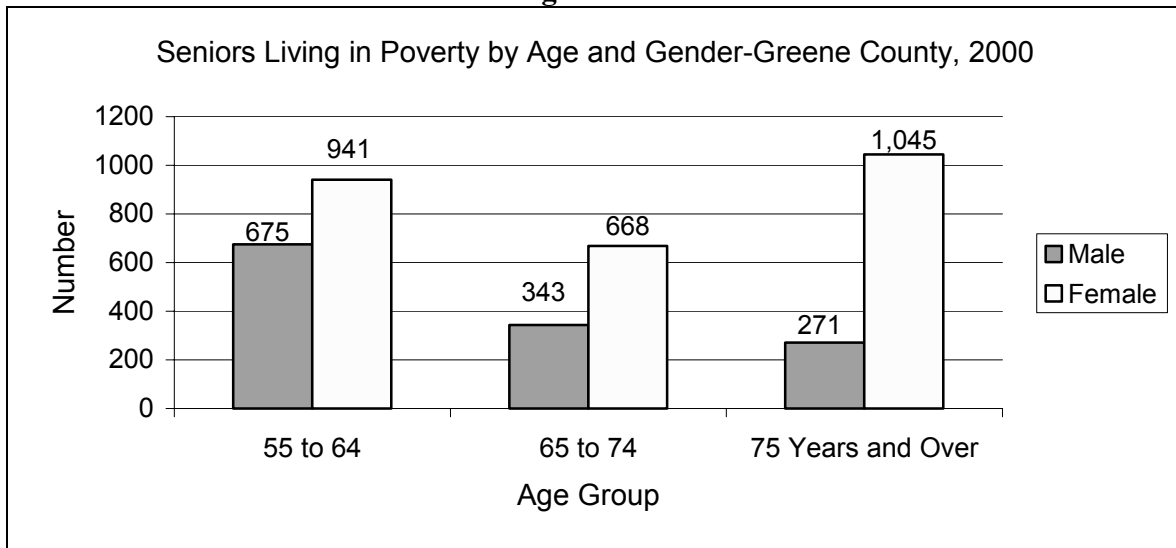
The numbers of residents over 60 years of age who were employed in the year 2000 are indicated in Figure 8.4. A large number of seniors continued to work after age 65, with 802 men and women over 75 years of age working in Greene County.

**Figure 8.4**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

**Figure 8.5**

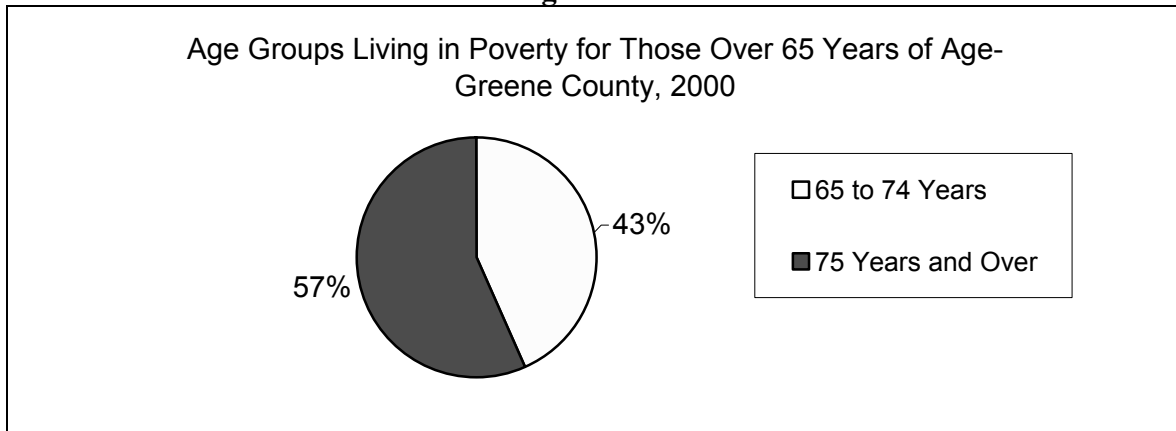


Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The number of seniors living in poverty is shown in Figure 8.5. In the year 2000, many more females than males over the age of 55 were living in poverty. This coincides with the socioeconomic data that indicates that more women are represented in poverty categories in other age groups. The income determinations for classifying those in poverty are presented in the Federal Poverty Guidelines in Chapter 2, Figure 2.3.

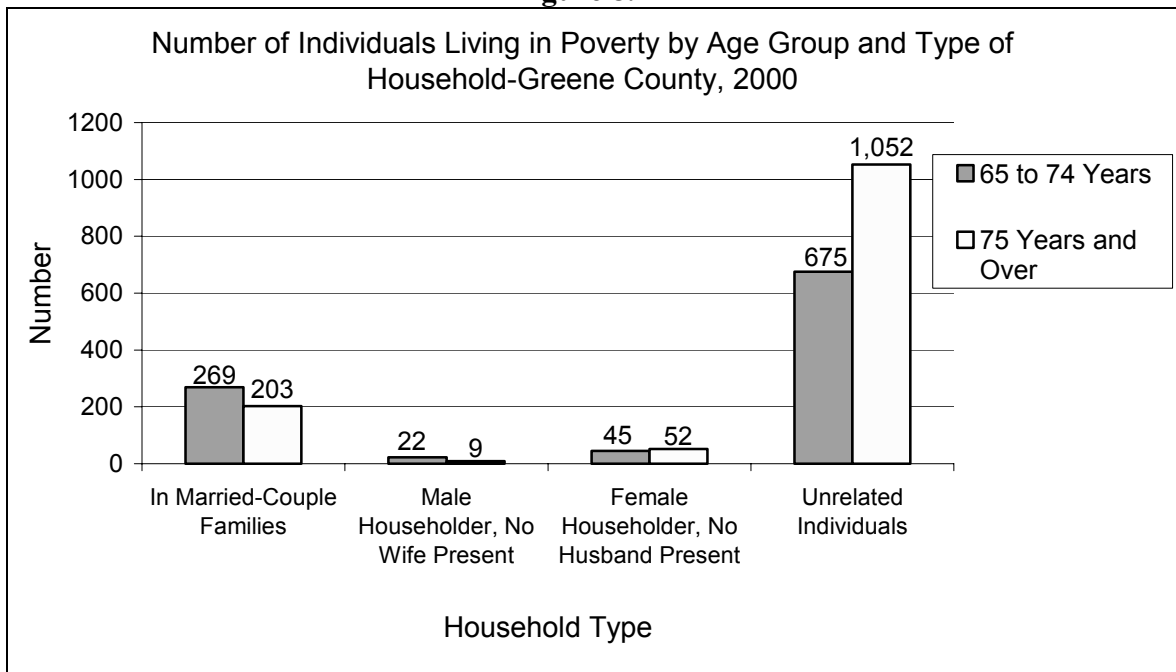
When examining the age distribution of seniors in poverty, those over 75 years of age made up 57% of the group (Figure 8.6). Household types in which seniors in poverty live are illustrated in Figures 8.7 to 8.9. The majority of individuals over age 65 who live below poverty levels were found in households with unrelated individuals. Those households classified as *unrelated individuals* include those seniors who are living alone or with other non-related persons. Senior married couples represented the second largest group over the age of 65 living in poverty in Greene County. The institutionalized senior (over age 65) population of Greene County consisted of 1,735 individuals in nursing homes and 38 incarcerated senior men in the year 2000. Those people identified as living in group quarters are categorized separately from households by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**Figure 8.6**



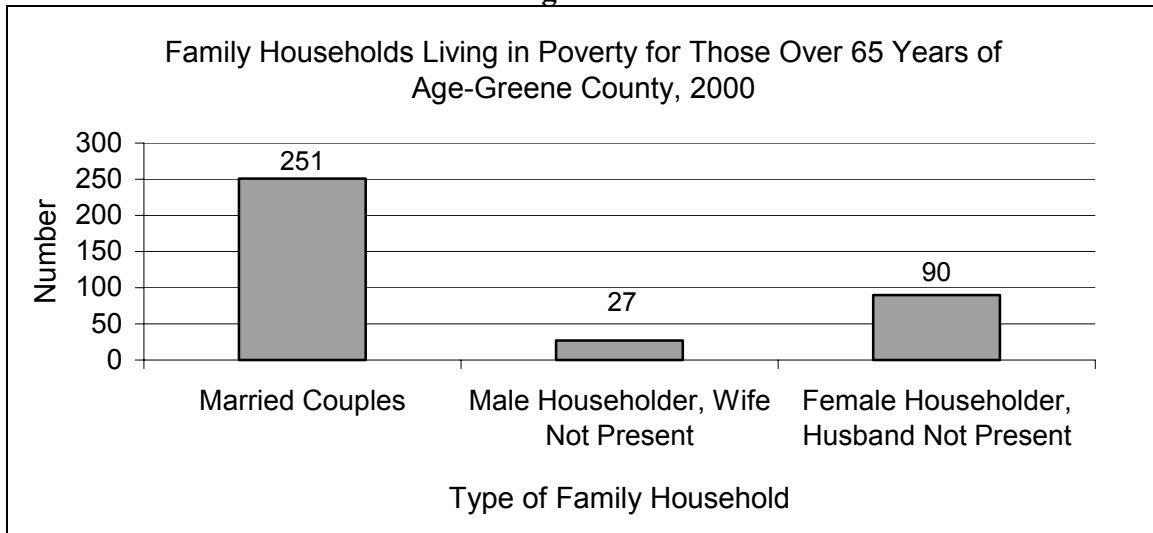
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=2,327

**Figure 8.7**



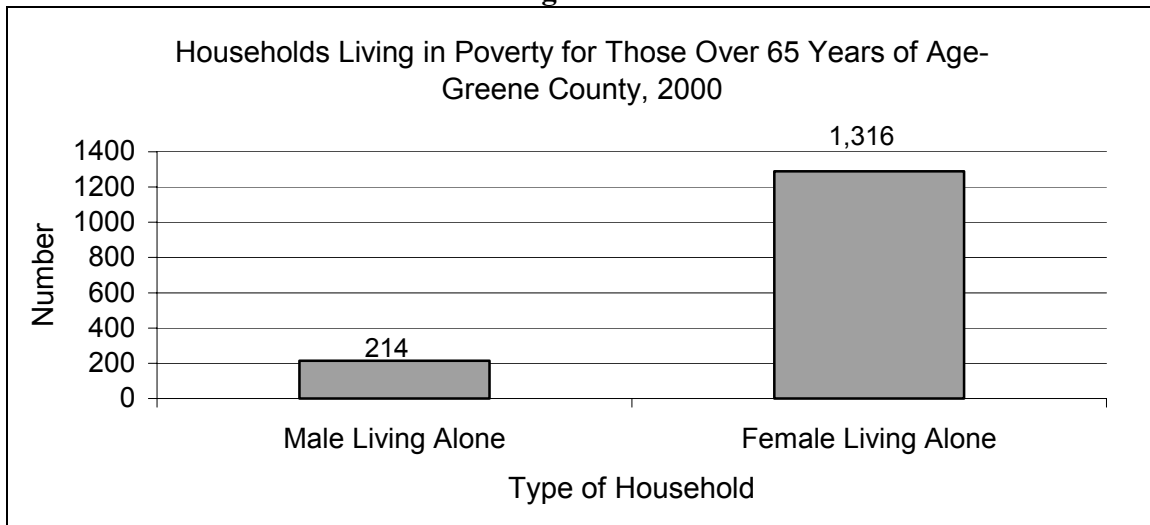
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

**Figure 8.8**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

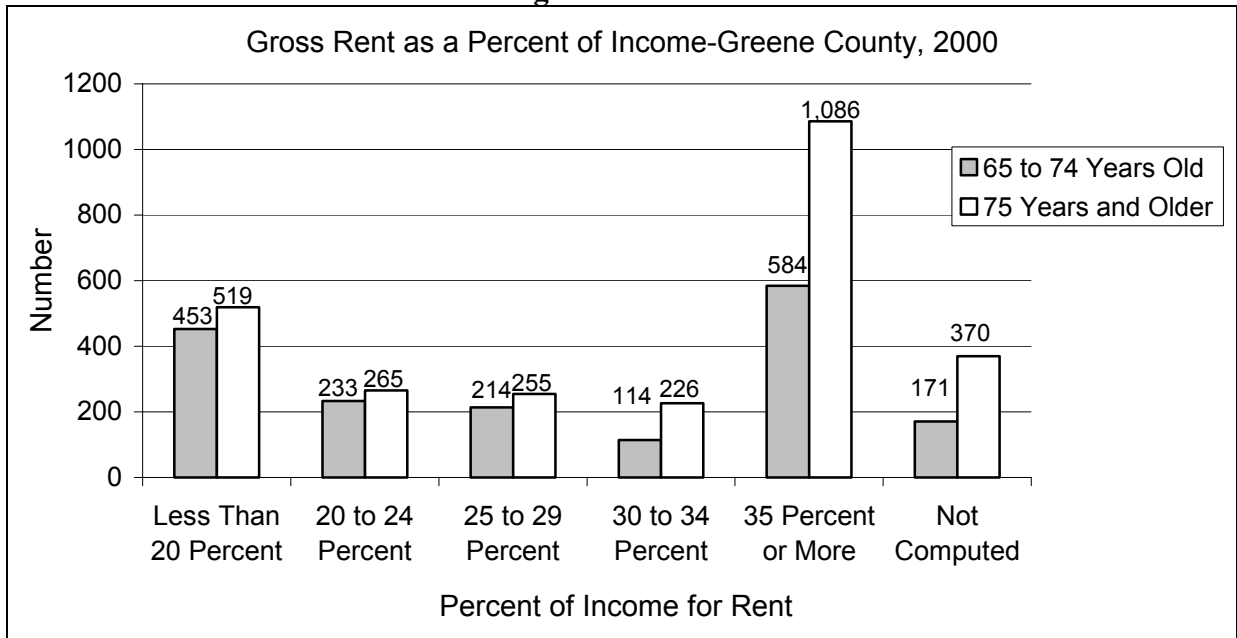
**Figure 8.9**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Rent as a percent of income is presented in Figure 8.10. For those over the age of 65 in Greene County, a large proportion of senior householders had rent that represented 35% or more of their income.

**Figure 8.10**

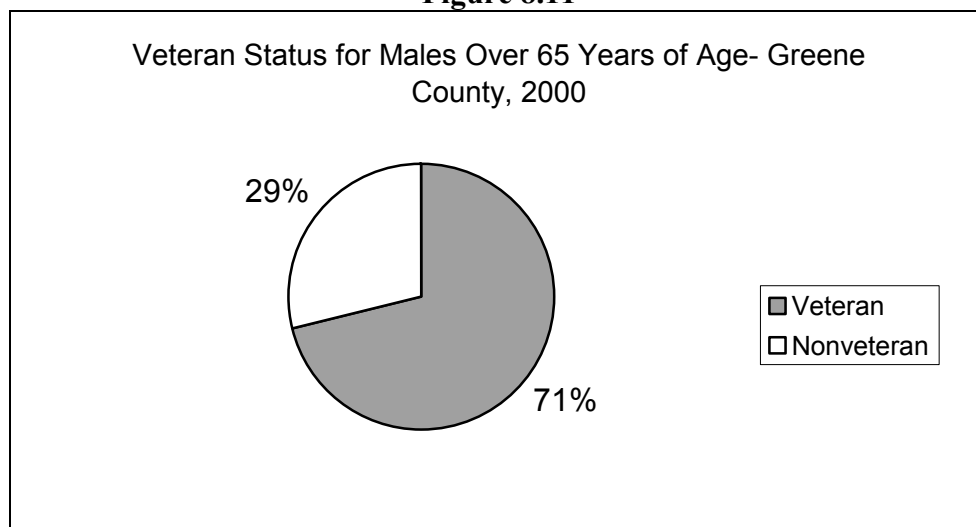


Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

### Veteran Status

Veteran status for male and female seniors in Greene County is shown in Figures 8.11 and 8.12. Veteran status provides these seniors with increased access to a variety of government benefits that may improve living conditions.

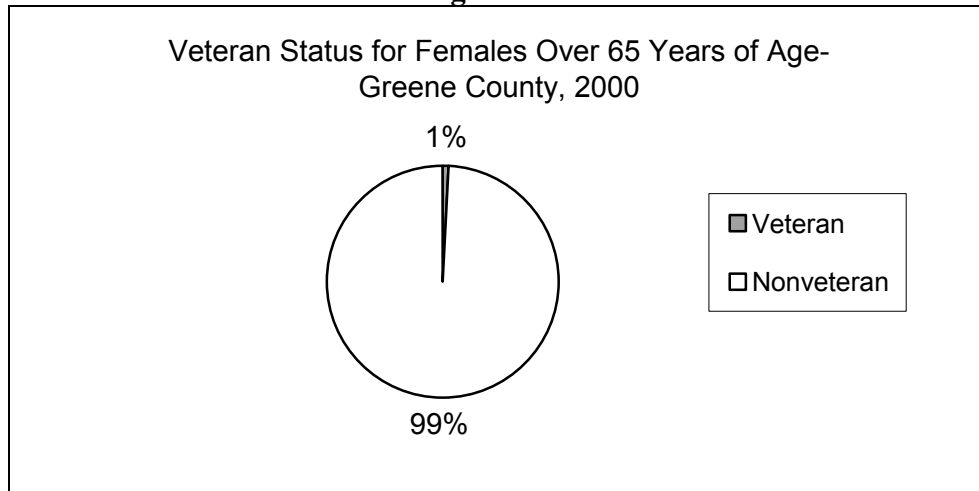
**Figure 8.11**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=13,024



**Figure 8.12**



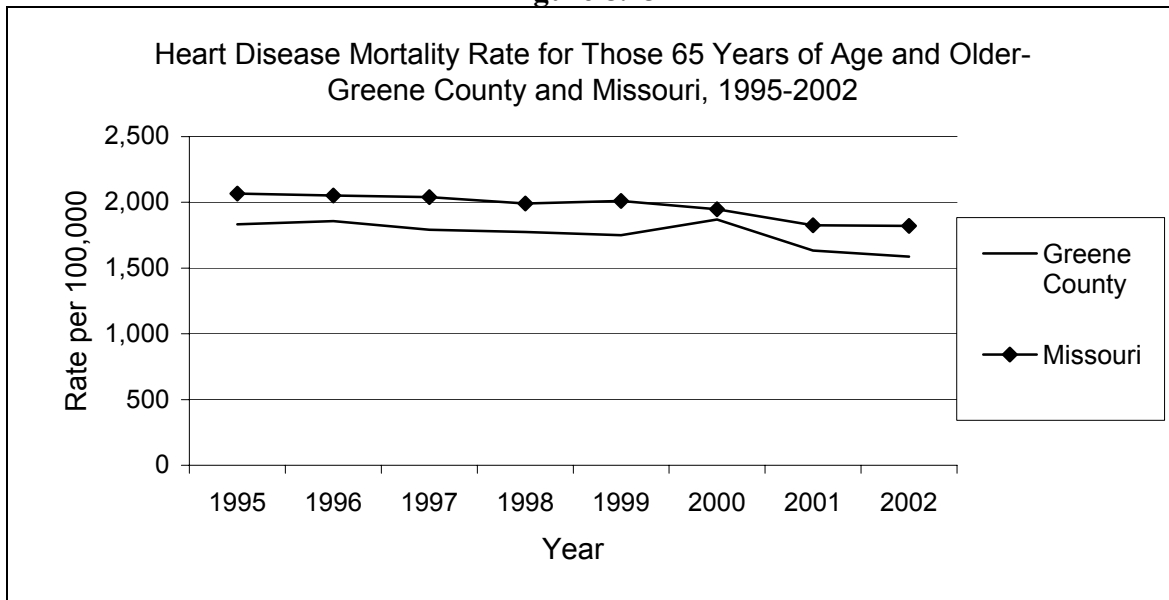
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n=19,839

### **Mortality Rates**

Mortality rates for Greene County seniors are shown in the following charts for a number of chronic diseases. The development of chronic diseases is influenced by lifestyle choices such as diet and exercise. The number of potential years lost and the quality of life experienced by Greene County seniors are both impacted as these chronic diseases progress.

The rate of heart disease deaths for Greene County seniors is displayed in Figure 8.13 as compared to Missouri. The Greene County rate has been lower than the state rate since 1995, with a slight downward trend for both the county and state.

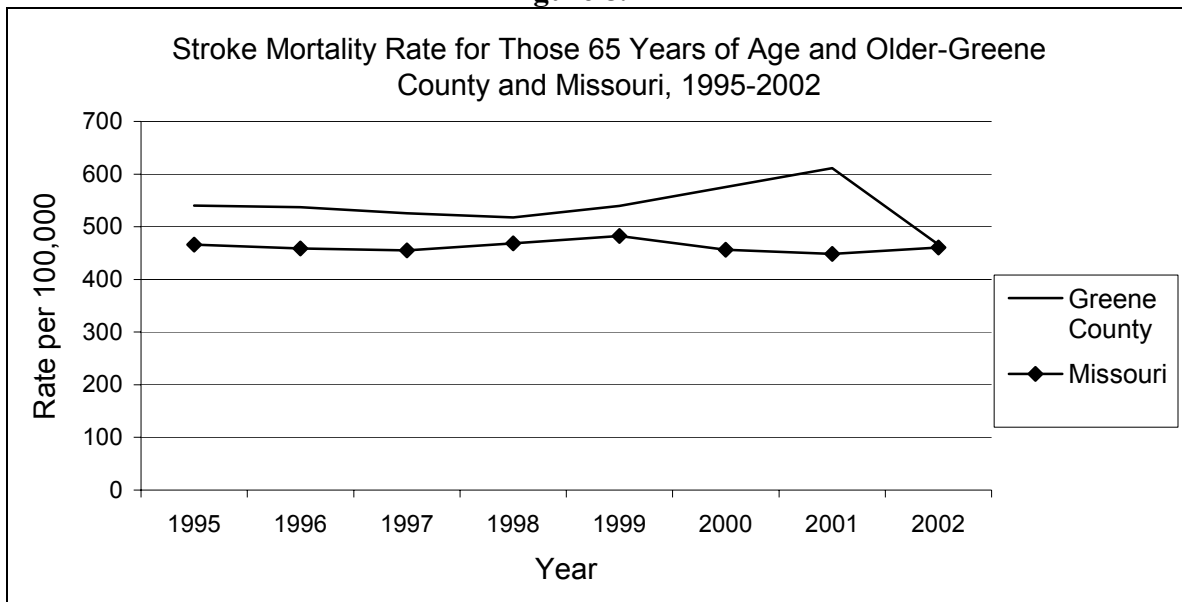
**Figure 8.13**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Deaths due to stroke are shown in Figure 8.14. Since 1995, Greene County seniors have had a higher mortality rate than the state rate, with a substantial increase from 1998 to 2001.

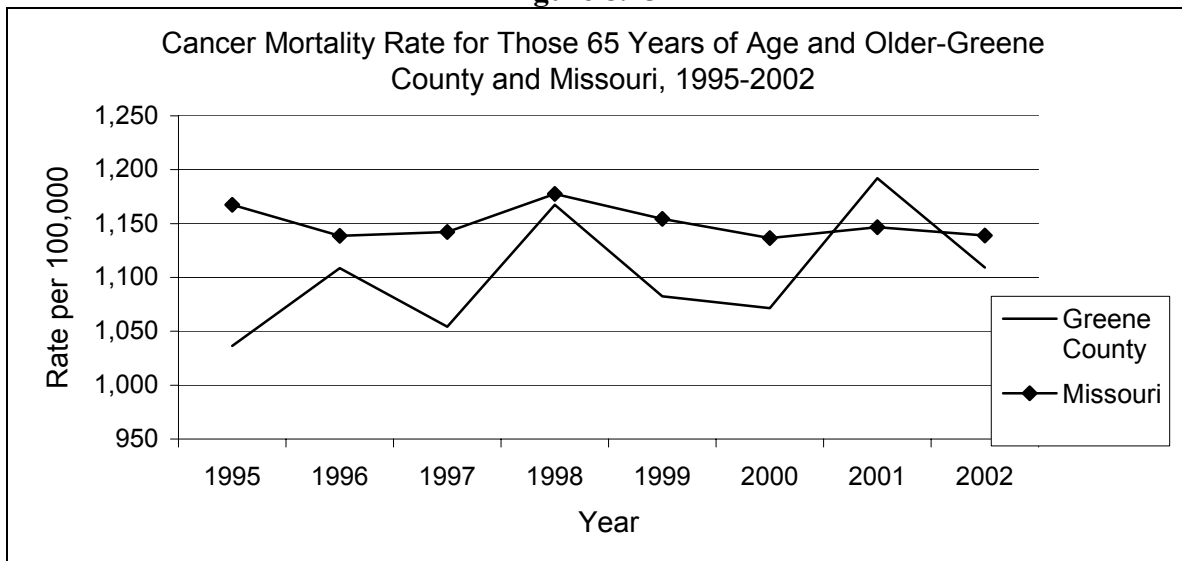
**Figure 8.14**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Cancer mortality rates in Greene County have fluctuated greatly from 1995 to 2002. Greene County has had lower rates than the state for the majority of years examined. However, the cancer mortality rate in the county has had an overall upward trend and increased beyond the state rate in 2001.

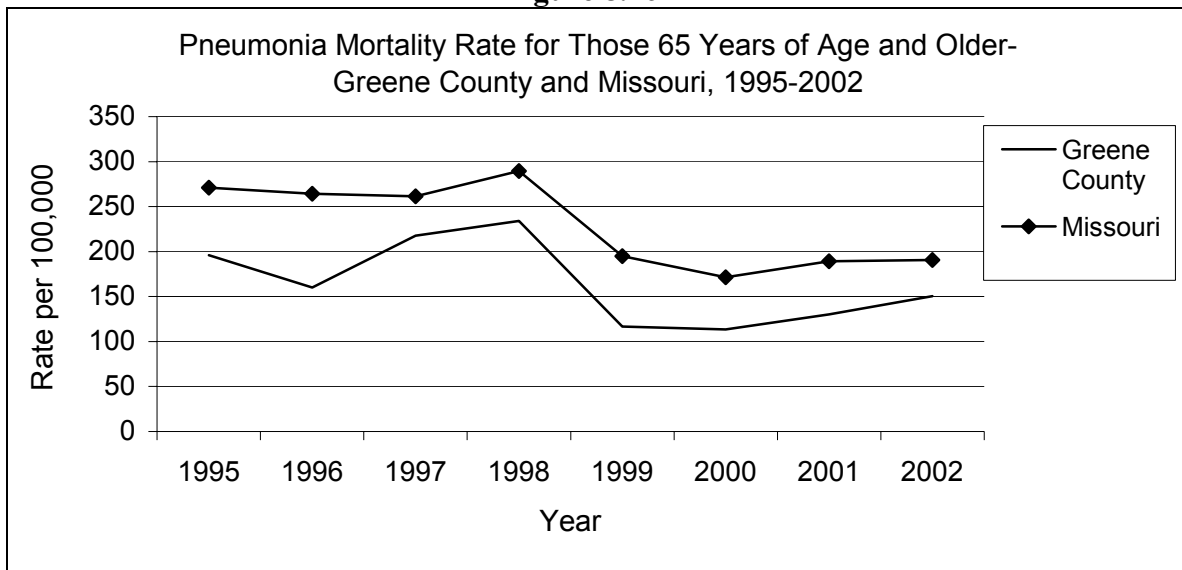
**Figure 8.15**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Figure 8.16 displays the pneumonia mortality rate of Greene County residents over the age of 65.

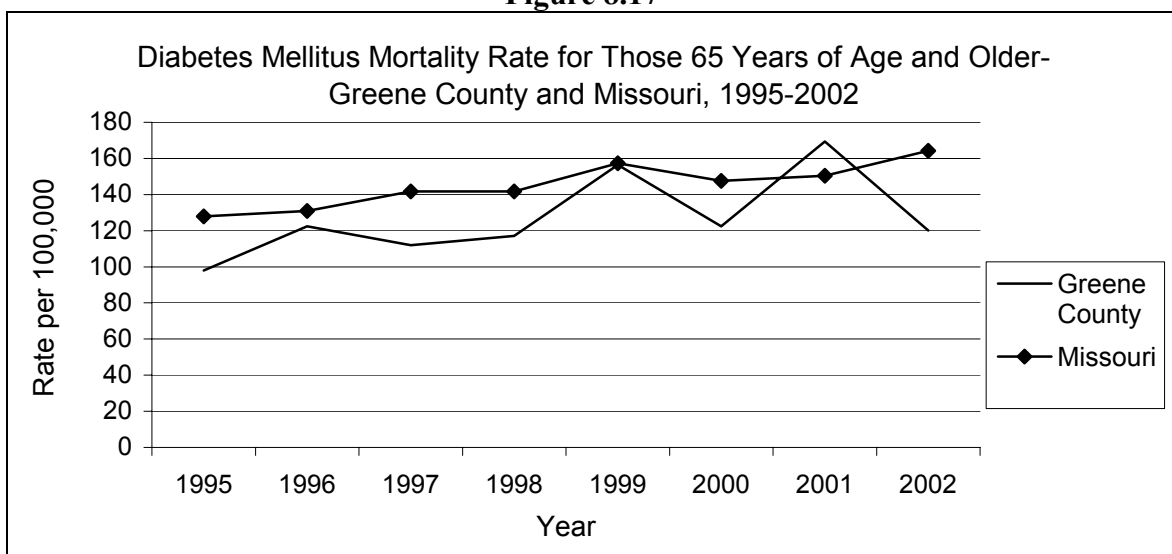
**Figure 8.16**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Figure 8.17 illustrates the increasing trend in mortality due to diabetes mellitus among the senior population in Greene County. This rate will continue to increase as obesity and sedentary lifestyles impact the senior population and general population of Greene County. However, this trend can be reversed if seniors and the general population engage in more physical activity, change dietary habits, and maintain healthy weight.

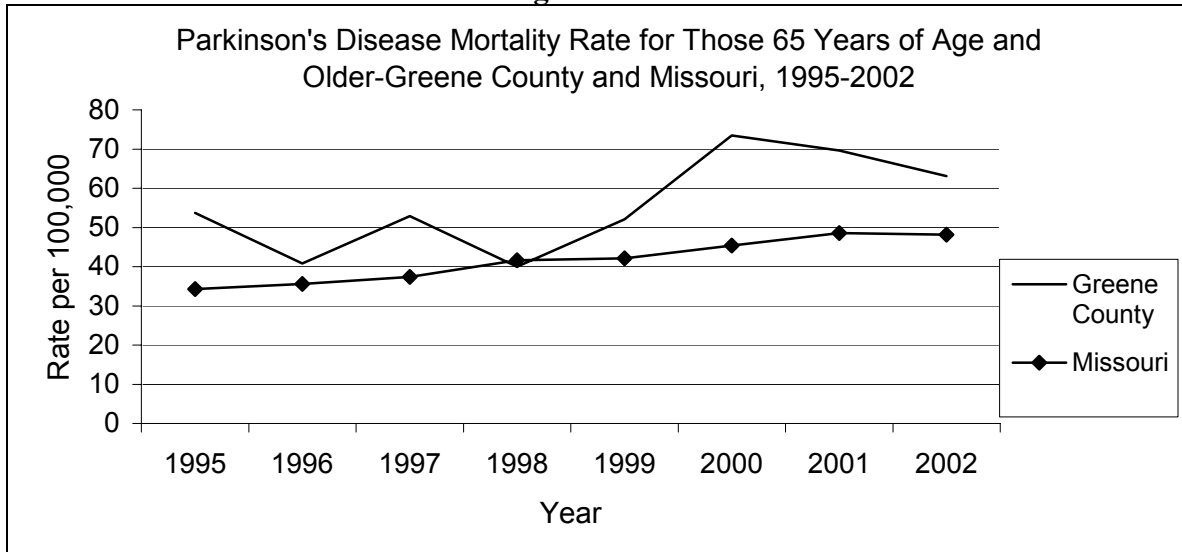
**Figure 8.17**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Deaths due to Parkinson's disease have also been increasing in Greene County (Figure 8.18). Parkinson's disease affects the central nervous system through decreased production of dopamine. The disease affects men and women over 60 years of age primarily, but an increasing incidence has been observed in younger people across the nation (American Parkinson's Disease Association).

**Figure 8.18**



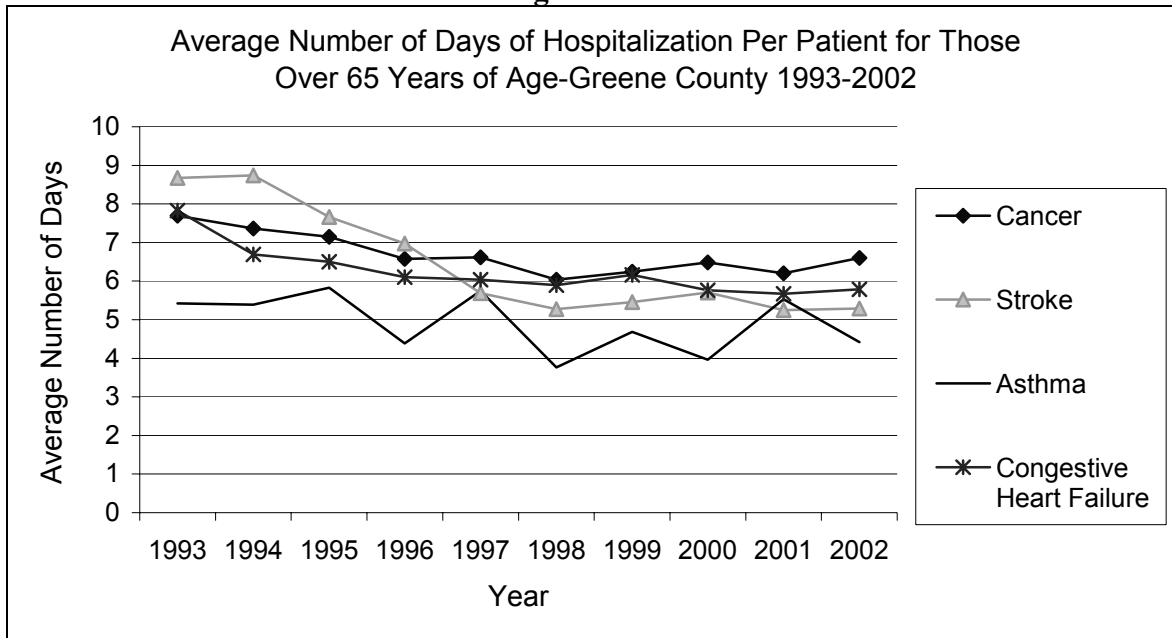
Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

## Hospitalization

Hospitalization is a continuing concern among the senior population. The decreasing numbers of days of hospital care for certain diseases and procedures results in some patients returning home sooner than expected. This may result in some patients experiencing greater difficulties when recuperating at home. Figure 8.19 indicates the average number of days of hospitalization reported for certain diseases in Greene County. In each instance, since 1993, there has been a downward trend in the number of days of hospitalization.

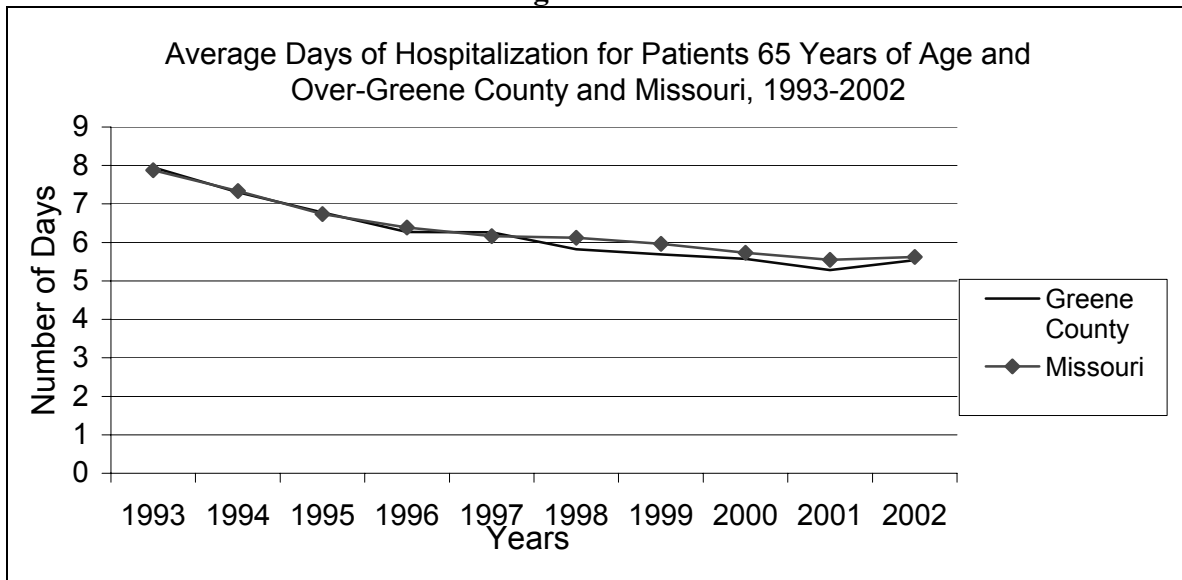
Figure 8.20 provides a cumulative comparison of the average number of hospitalization days for all illnesses in Greene County and Missouri. There was little difference between the data presented for the state and county. On average, the patients hospitalized in the year 2002 stayed for fewer days compared to 1993.

**Figure 8.19**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

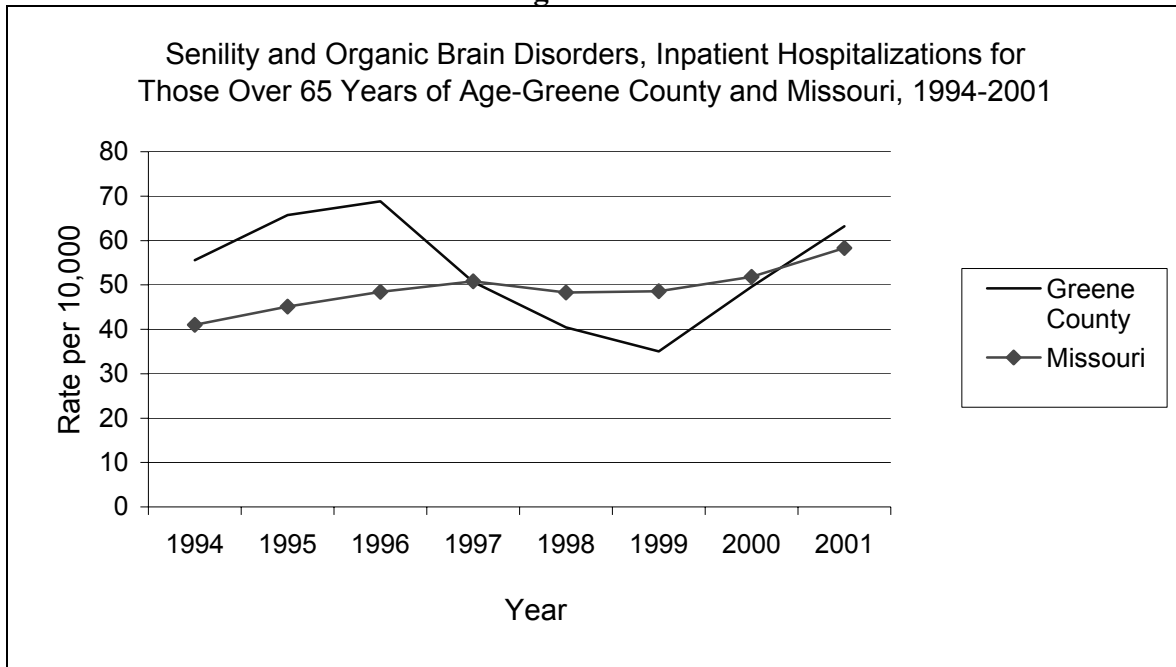
**Figure 8.20**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

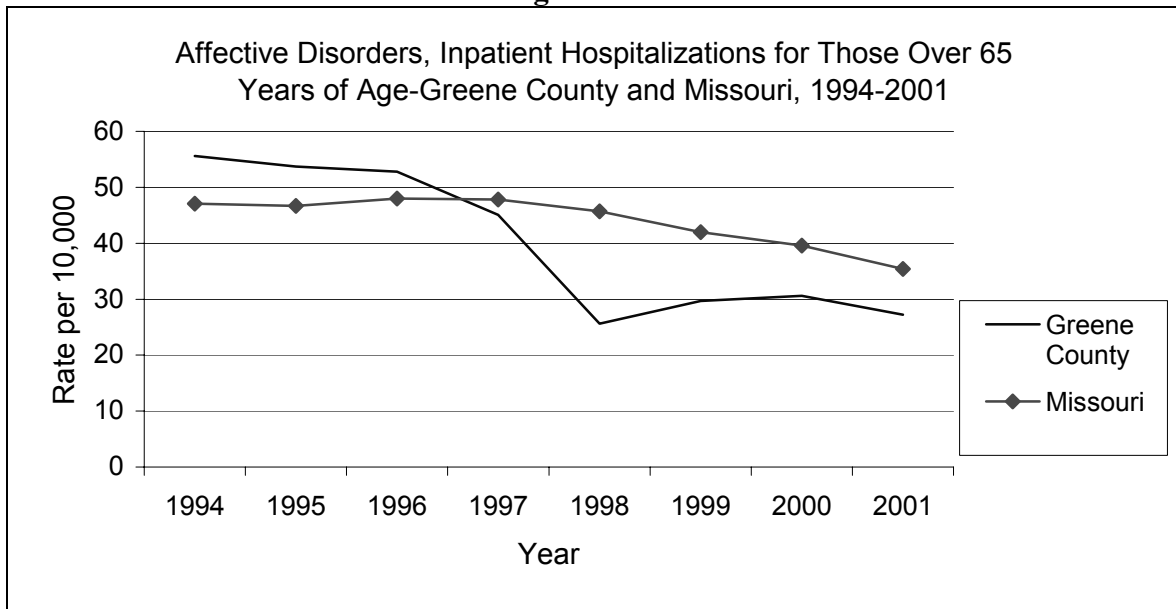
Hospitalization for mental illnesses for Greene County seniors is indicated in Figures 8.21 and 8.22. The rates of hospitalization for senility and other organic brain disorders increased during 2000 and 2001, after a significant decrease the preceding years (Figure 8.21). Inpatient hospitalization for affective disorders followed a more stable trend from 1999 to 2001, as indicated in Figure 8.22.

**Figure 8.21**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

**Figure 8.22**

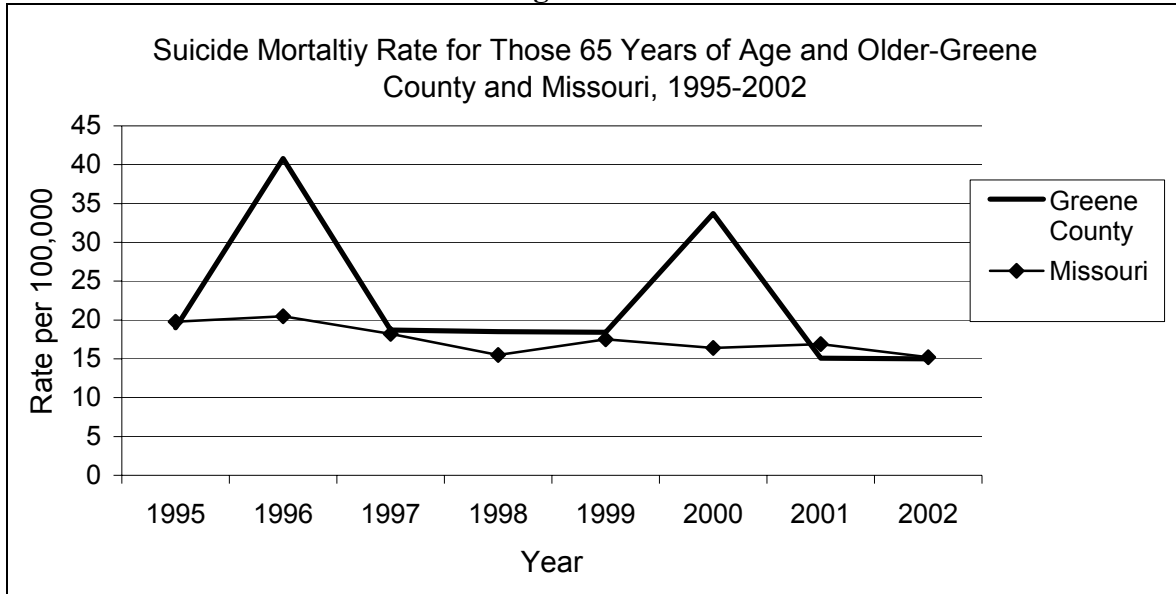


Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

## Suicide

Suicide deaths among seniors in Greene County have fluctuated greatly between the years of 1995 to 2002.

**Figure 8.23**

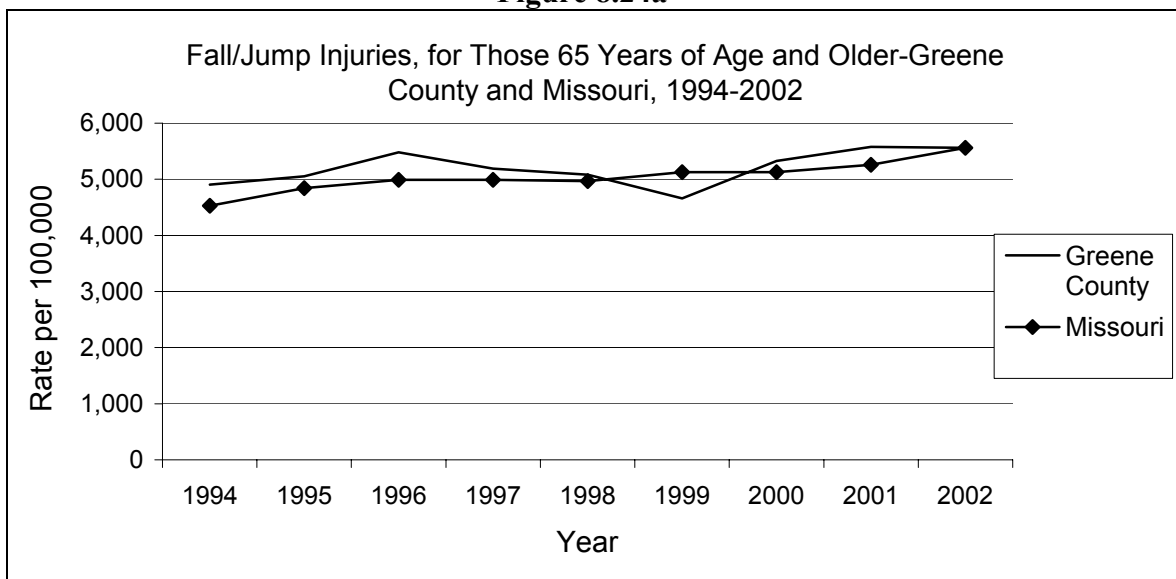


Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

## Non-Intentional Injuries

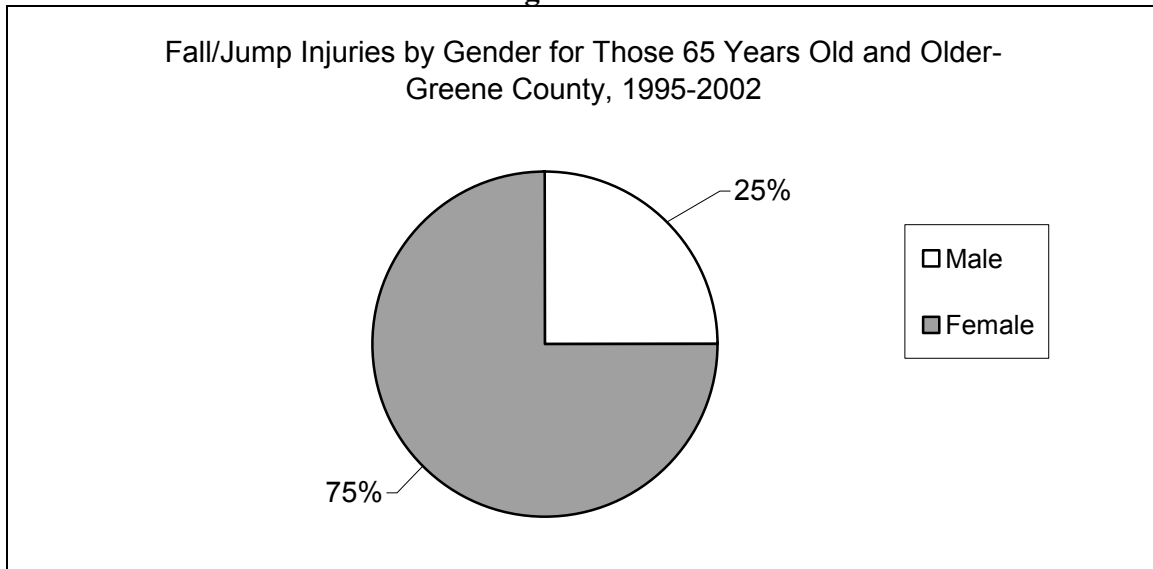
Debilitating injuries resulting from accidents are a great threat by affecting the quality and length of life for seniors in Greene County. Injuries due to falls have been higher than the state average from 1994 to 2001 with women representing a larger proportion of the reported injuries, Figure 8.24b.

**Figure 8.24a**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

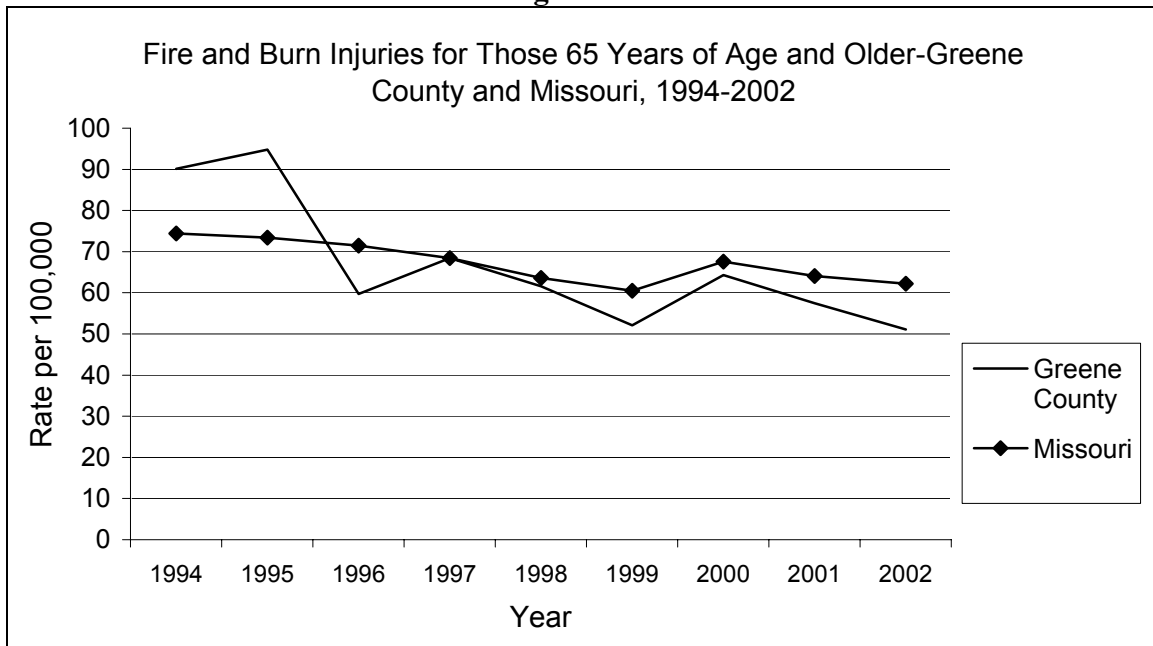
**Figure 8.24b**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services; n=15,143

Figure 8.25 presents a decreasing trend in the number of fire and burn injuries reported in Greene County and Missouri.

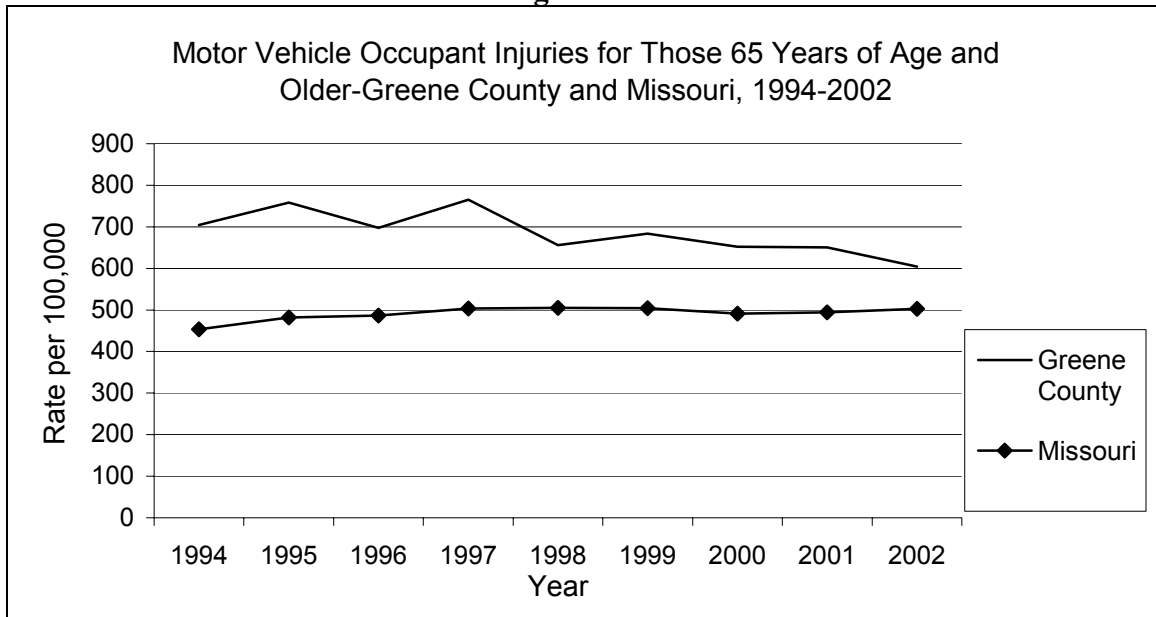
**Figure 8.25**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services



**Figure 8.26**

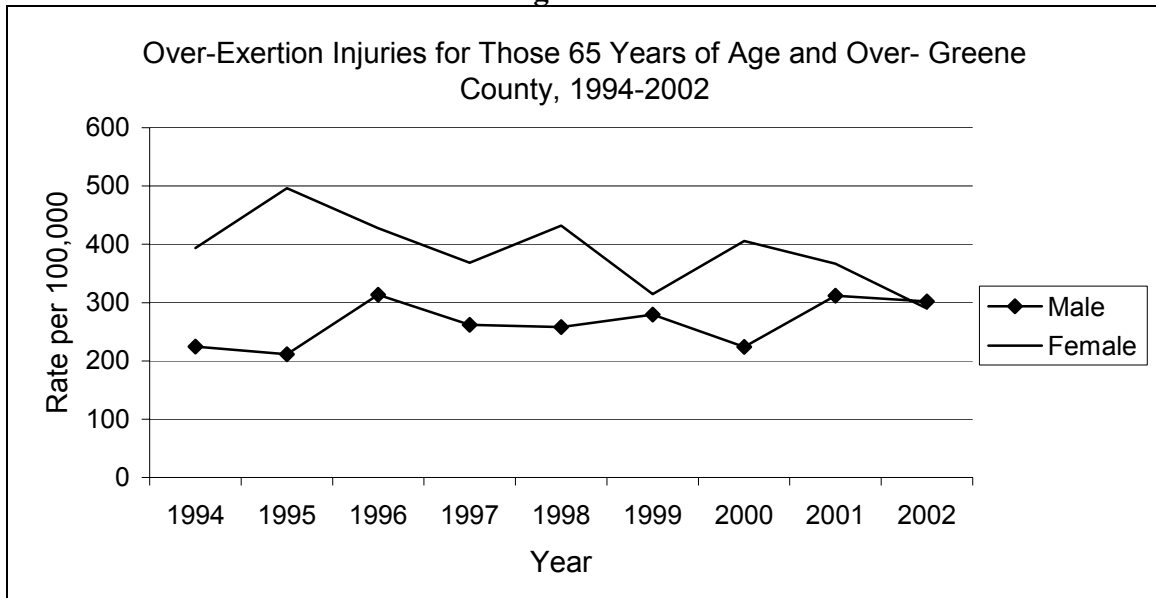


Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

The rate of injuries for motor vehicle occupants over the age of 65 in Greene County is indicated above. The rate for seniors in Greene County has decreased since 1994, although it continues to remain higher than the state's rate.

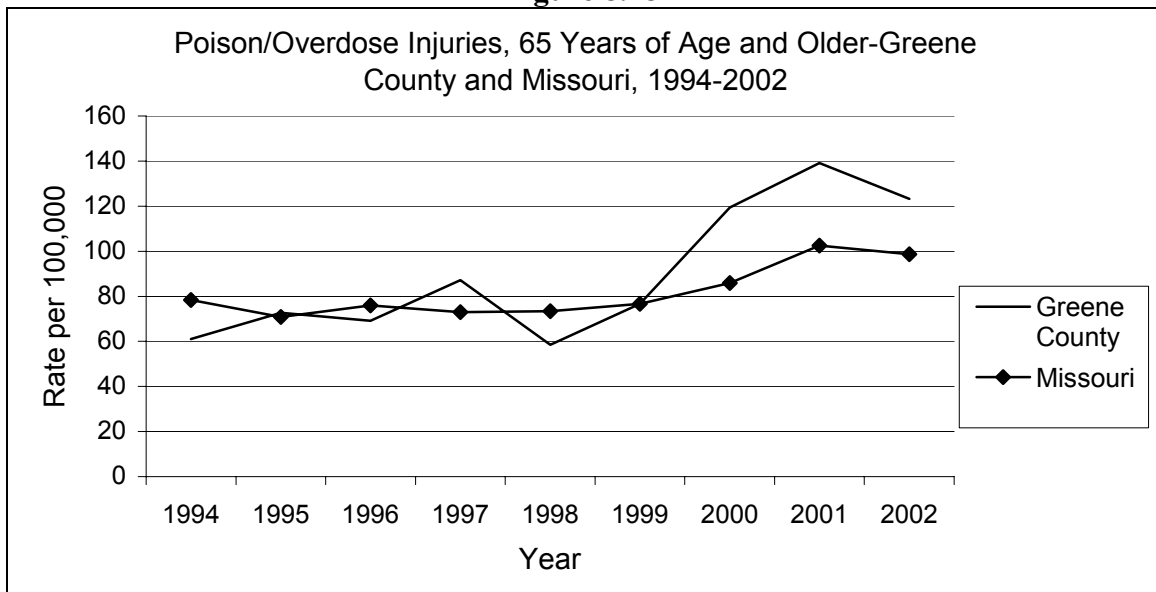
Over-exertion injuries among Greene County seniors are presented in Figure 8.27 by gender. These injuries are non-impact injuries resulting from a combination of repetitive and/or strenuous physical activity. These injuries can occur over time, or through a single incident. Physical activities that commonly result in these injuries occur during daily activities such as work, exercise, hobbies, and recreation. Over-exertion injuries among females over the age of 65 have decreased since 1994 in Greene County. But, the rate for male over-exertion injuries has increased somewhat from 2000 to 2002 (Figure 8.27).

**Figure 8.27**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

**Figure 8.28**

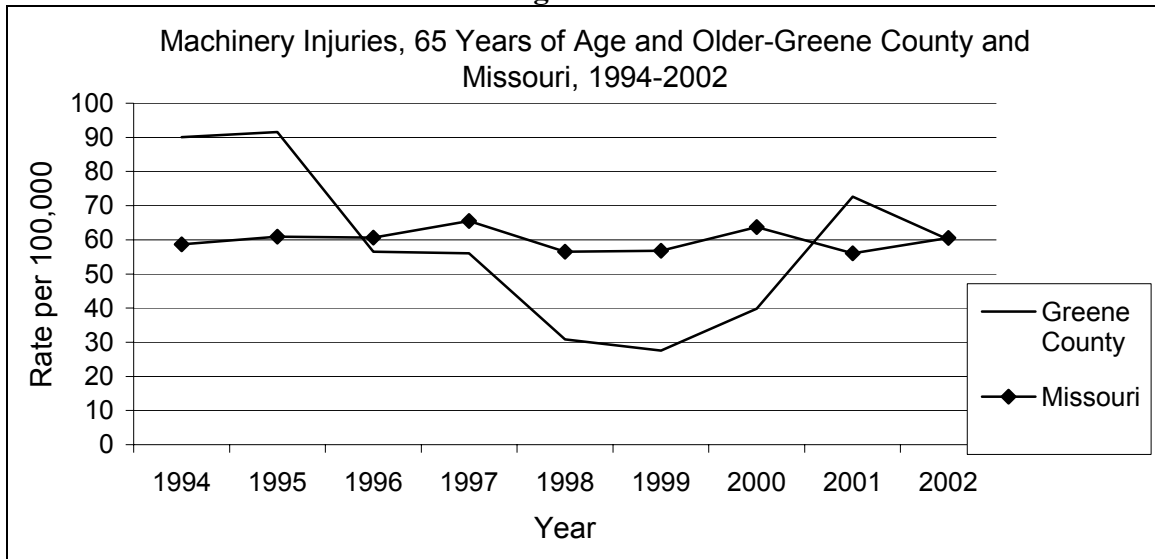


Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Poison injuries in Greene County increased dramatically from 1998 to 2001, but have since decreased slightly. This rate includes accidental overdose and misuse of medications. This issue may become more problematic in the future as cheaper medications available through Internet distributors circumvent close medical supervision.

Machinery injuries for Greene County seniors decreased significantly from 1994 to 1999 (Figure 8.29). However, a dramatic increase from 1999 to 2001 was present in Greene County.

**Figure 8.29**

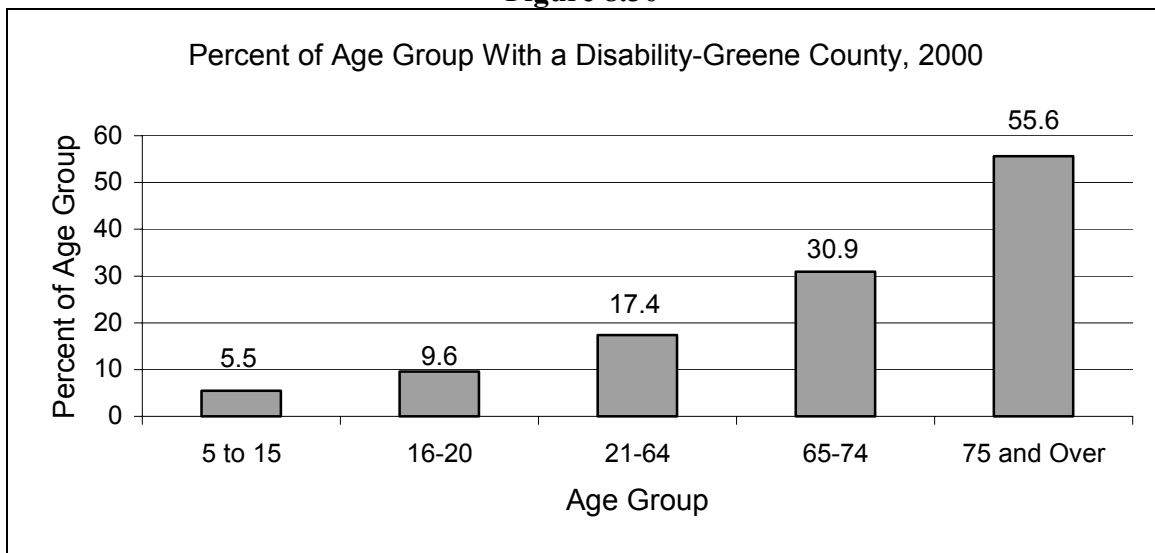


Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

## Disabilities

The percent of those with disabilities for all age groups is displayed in Figure 8.30. The chart indicates that a large percentage of the senior population reported having a disability in the year 2000.

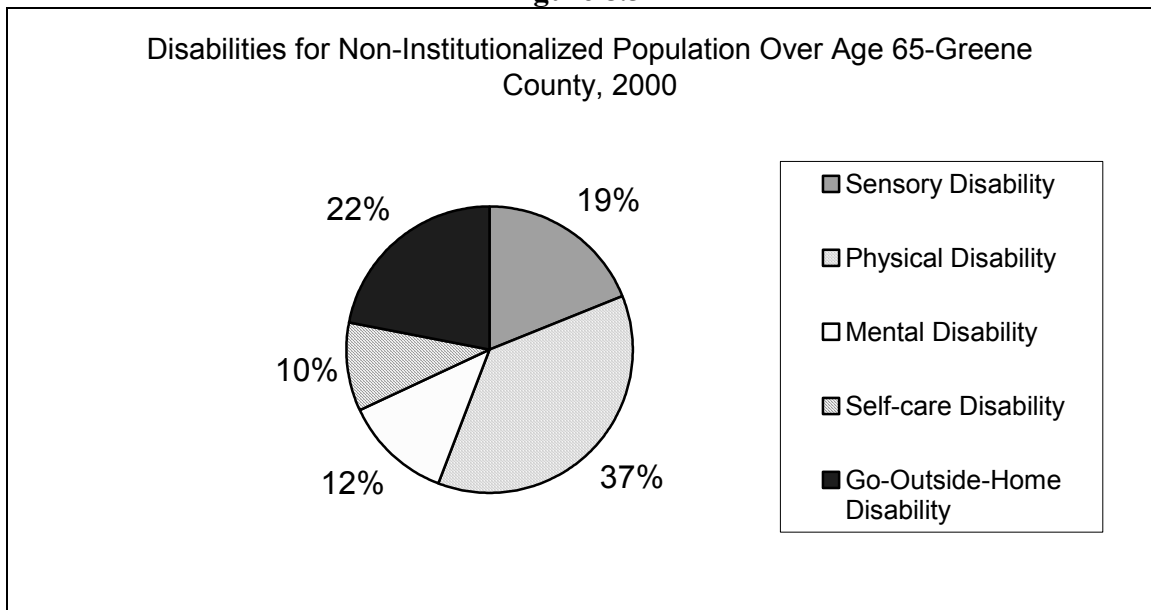
**Figure 8.30**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The type of disability reported by those over the age of 65 is presented in Figure 8.31. The majority of disabilities reported by this group were physical disabilities (37%).

**Figure 8.31**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; n= 24,985

### Service Issues

Service issues are those that impact quality of life and access to services for Greene County seniors. Only a few issues were examined due to the availability of data. The indicators that are presented were collected through the U.S. Census and provide a glimpse of those seniors in the community who may have difficulties accessing services. For instance in Table 8.1 the number of seniors without telephone service is shown. A total of 205 senior householders did not have telephone service in Greene County in the year 2000.

**Table 8.1**

<b>Telephone Service: Home Owners vs. Renters-Greene County, 2000</b>					
	<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>% of Homeowners</b>	<b>Renter Occupied</b>	<b>% of Renters</b>	<b>Total</b>
With Telephone Service (Total)	61,798	99.2	33,546	94.5	
Householder 65 to 74 Years	8,711	99.5	1,697	95.1	10,408
Householder 75 Years +	7,754	99.5	2,721	98.7	10,475
No Telephone Service (Total)	486	0.8	2,029	5.7	
Householder 65 to 74 Years	46	0.5	88	4.9	134
Householder 75 Years +	35	0.4	36	1.3	71

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Access to transportation is an important issue for Greene County seniors. Transportation allows for greater freedom and easier access to services. Table 8.2 displays the numbers

of seniors by age group that do not have access to a vehicle in their household. A total of 2,632 persons over the age of 65 in Greene County reported not having access to a private vehicle in the year 2000.

**Table 8.2**

<b>No Private Vehicle Available by Age of Householder-Greene County, 2000</b>						
	<b>Homeowner</b>	<b>% of Homeowners</b>	<b>Renter</b>	<b>% of Renters</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Of Households</b>
No Vehicle Available: (Total For All Ages)	2,161	3.5	4,776	13.4	6,937	7.1
Householder 55 to 64 Years Old	267	2.7	420	19.0	687	5.6
Householder 65 to 74 Years Old	307	3.5	457	25.6	764	7.2
Householder 75 Years Old and Over	844	10.8	1,024	37.1	1,868	17.7

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Another important issue facing some Greene County residents involves providing care for grandchildren for extended lengths of time. Although grandparents may enjoy the time they have with their grandchildren, the role of primary caretaker for extended periods of time may become overwhelming for some. Table 8.3 shows the reported length of time that some county grandparents have taken care of their grandchildren who were under 18 years of age. In Greene County, 1,211 grandparents reported some responsibility for their grandchildren's care. Although this data does not pertain to seniors necessarily, it does indicate that a segment of the grandparent population is handling increased child-care responsibilities.

**Table 8.3**

<b>Grandparents Responsible for Own Grandchildren by Length of Time-Greene County, 2000</b>	
	<b>2000</b>
Grandparent Responsible for Own Grandchildren (Under 18 Years of Age)	1,211
Length of Time --	
Less Than 6 Months	145
6 to 11 Months	192
1 or 2 Years	295
3 or 4 Years	184
5 Years or More	395
Grandparent Not Responsible for Own Grandchildren <18 Years Old	1,484

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

## **Crime**

Crime is a concern for Greene County seniors. In particular, seniors experience numerous incidents of theft, forgery, burglaries, and robberies. Table 8.4 indicates that Springfield seniors reported 519 incidents of theft (stealing, burglaries, forgery, and robbery) out of 790 total criminal incidents. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Senior Services reports that approximately 70 cases of

financial exploitation are reported per month with the perpetrators being: family members or a new “best friend.”

**Table 8.4**

<b>Incidence of Crime with Victims Over 65 Years of Age-Springfield, June 2002 to July 2003</b>		
<b>Offense</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Stealing	400	50.6
Vandalism/Property Damage	161	20.4
Residential Burglaries	90	11.4
Assault	48	6.1
Forgery	26	3.3
Harassment	24	3.0
Noise Disturbances	15	1.9
Domestic Disturbances	12	1.5
Order Protection Violation	7	0.9
General Disturbances	3	0.4
Robbery	3	0.4
Sex Offenses, Except Rape	1	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>790</b>	

Source: Springfield Police Department

The victim characteristics of those seniors reporting crimes in Springfield are presented below. Table 8.5 shows that both males and females are targeted with equal frequency with the average age of the victim being 74. Racial characteristics of crime victims are shown in Table 8.6.

**Table 8.5**

<b>Crime Victim Characteristics-Springfield, June 2002 to July 2003</b>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Total</b>	795	384	408
<b>Average Age of Senior Victims (65 and Over)</b>	74	73	74

Source: Springfield Police Department

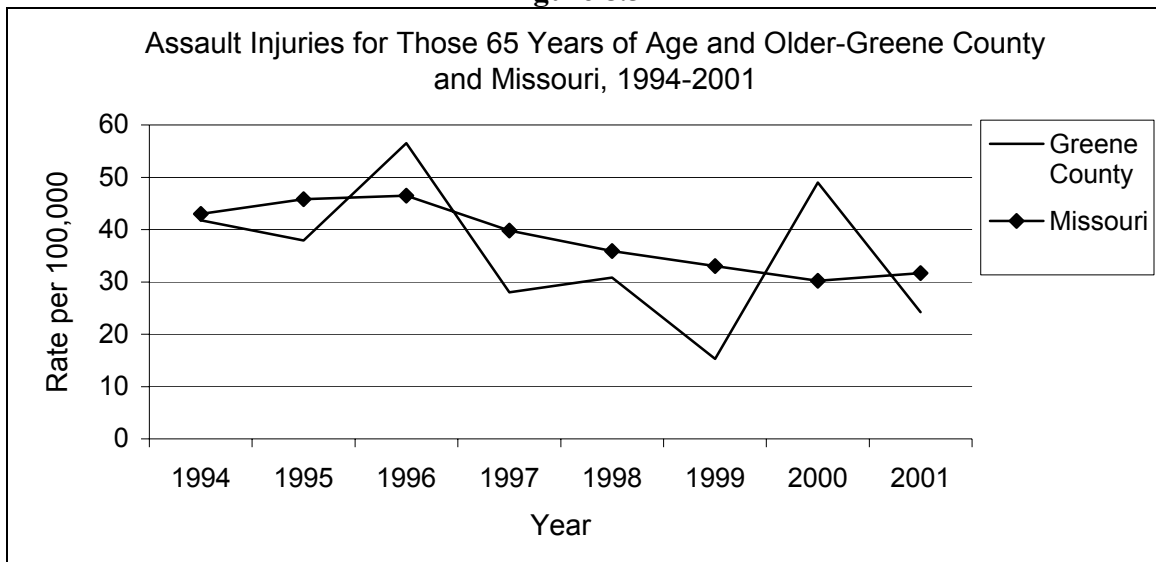
**Table 8.6**

<b>Crime Victim Characteristics by Race, for Those Over 65 Years of Age-Springfield, June 2002-July 2003</b>						
	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>Native American/Alaskan Native</b>	<b>Asian American</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Total</b>	765	10	1	1	2	16
<b>Percent of Total</b>	96.2	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	2.0
<b>Average Age of Victims Over 65 Years of Age</b>	74	70	67	84	72	74

Source: Springfield Police Department

The rate of assault injuries has decreased for Greene County and Missouri since 1994 overall, Figure 8.32. However, an increase in assault injuries was seen in recent years.

**Figure 8.32**



Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

### **Social Support Programs**

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the social support programs available to Greene County seniors agencies were contacted to collect data. Information from some area agencies is presented below in Tables 8.7 and 8.8. The efforts put forth by these agencies is greatly appreciated considering many data items were not easy to determine.

#### *Meals on Wheels*

Meals on Wheels provides many seniors in Greene County with hot meals and some companionship. The seniors are allowed to choose their meals from a variety of menu items with each meal costing \$3.40.

**Table 8.7**

<b>MEALS ON WHEELS: Operations Information-Greene County, 2003</b>				
15 Drivers	Routes	Number of Clients	Total Clients Per Day (Approx)	Total Per Week (5 Days/Week)
Cox South	12	10 to 12	120	600
Cox North	10	10	100	500

Source: Meals on Wheels

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Southwest Missouri Office on Aging also has a home delivered meals program for seniors not requiring more extensive services. This program served 95,880 meals to over 400 seniors in Greene County during 2003, or approximately 1,844 meals per week to over 300 seniors.

The Division of Senior Services provides a number of services that assist seniors who want to remain in their homes to prevent early or unnecessary institutionalization. Some of the in-home services that are provided by the state include: personal care, advanced personal care, homemaker care, respite care, RN visits, Home Delivered Meals (HDMs), and adult day healthcare (ADHC). Qualifying for services is based on several variables including age and assessed need. Those over 60 years of age or the disabled between the ages of 18-59 are eligible to receive services. Medicaid is the primary source of payment for these services. A monthly cost cap of \$2368 exists for any individual receiving in home care through the Division of Senior Services. The cost for a client receiving an average amount of services is approximately \$500 per month. The number of individuals receiving in-home services are listed in Table 8.8. Of those receiving services, less than 3% are African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American.

**Table 8.8**

<b>Number of Seniors Receiving In-home Services-Greene County, 2003</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Total	1,100	
Under Age 60	399	36%
Over Age 60	701	64%

Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Senior Services

In-home service clients:

- 995 receive a combination of Personal Care (PC), Advanced Personal Care (APC), Homemaker Care (HC), Respite, and RN visits.
- 103 receive Adult Day Healthcare services.
- 140 receive Home Delivered Meals.
- 138 are receiving services from the basic service group as well as ADHC and HDMs.

In home services are authorized by units of time, with one unit usually equivalent to one hour, and a maximum of units to be provided per month.

**Table 8.9**

<b>Services Authorized For In-Home Service Clients-Greene County, 2003</b>			
<b>Service</b>	<b>Number of Clients</b>	<b>Total Units Authorized</b>	<b>Client Average/Month</b>
PC,APC,HC, Respite, RN	995	37,863	38
ADHC	103	2,275	22 Days
HDMs	140	5,653 Meals	40 Meals

Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Senior Services

Protective services for individuals with a disability between the ages of 18-59 and for those over 60 years are also provided. Protective services for eligible adults include the investigation of abuse, neglect, and exploitation reports and follow-up services to assist each client.



*For More Information, Please Refer to These Works Cited and Consulted*

American Parkinson's Disease Association.

Website: <http://www.apdaparkinson.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Website: <http://www.CDC.gov>

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging.

Website: <http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/>

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Missouri Information for Community Assessment.

Website: <http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/>

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Senior Services, Show-Me Long Term Care.

Website: [http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/Senior\\_Services/index.html](http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/Senior_Services/index.html)

National Health Interview Survey 2002 (civilian, non-institutionalized population).

U.S. Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Summary File 1,100 Percent Data. Census 2000.

Website: <http://www.census.gov>

U.S. Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce. Summary File 3,100 Percent Data. Census 2000.

Website: <http://www.census.gov>

"I will never be an old man. To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am."

Francis Bacon

“It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.”

Confucius

“Determine never to be idle...It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.”

Thomas Jefferson

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing.”

Abraham Lincoln

“No man loves life like him that's growing old.”

Sophocles